



DISCUSSION NOTES

EGPR / Implementing AB 857 Regional Dialogue - Pajaro Valley
with the Governor's Office of Planning & Research
Sponsored by Action Pajaro Valley and
the California Policy Reform Network
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I. WHAT WORKS: Positive local experiences dealing with state agencies

- A. Six County Farm Bureaus are collaborating on voluntary actions to curb non-point-source runoff in the Central Coast. They are working with the Regional Water Board, NRCS & RCD's.
 - Why is this a success? The state agencies listen carefully, don't make value judgments, and provide bilingual persons to assist.
 - There is a defined goal, water quality, and the agencies work collaboratively toward it, allowing self-monitoring, educational programs, and what works.
- B. A permit streamlining program in North Monterey County around Elkhorn Slough: NRCS/RCD/Coastal Commission/Regional Board/Elkhorn Slough Reserve
- C. Salinas Valley Water Project—a good example of a solution to water supply in Salinas Valley
 - An \$18 million project for dams passed with 85% of the vote.
 - As part of the process, both the majority opinion and minority opinion were allowed to be heard and were valued
 - Thus, the interests were able to find areas of collaboration
- D. The Prunedale bypass transportation project was a good example of how Caltrans can shift resources from one project to another. The effort also had good community outreach and buy-in.
- E. In the Monterey County general plan, it is contentious to decide on agricultural preservation language, but the group is diverse and willing to sit down and talk, including ranchers, farmers, and vineyards with state agencies.

- F. The NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) is a system of stormwater permits that set runoff limits and help promote infill in the Bay Area.
- By including more stakeholders, the state created a little less stringent permit but is more likely to get volunteer activity.
 - The program went from an “unfunded State mandate” to a more pragmatic level.
 - The granting of permits is a “stick,” or consequence, to encourage compromise.

II. BEST PRACTICES: What works

- Find the nexus between majority and minority opinions – don’t bulldoze the minority.
- People who come from state agencies who are honest about their intentions, who listen to local opinions to hear good ideas instead of “putting on a regulatory hat,” who give stakeholders notice before taking action are the ones who are effective.
- Regional action happens via communication & collaboration, and sometimes a bulldog role from the state.

III. CONCERNS: Keep these in mind

- There are a lot of good policies in general plans and regional plans, but there is a constant disconnect between goals and the decisions that are made later. There needs to be a structure of incentives and disincentives to follow the policies, and ways to encourage local officials to think more regionally - over NIMBYs who are in front of them.
- In agriculture, understand that it isn’t just the land, but the ag economy that is vital. Part of preserving that economy is ensuring that there is adequate land for farming, and part is the other parts of the industry (transportation, workers, housing for those workers, etc.). Don’t forget farmers are stewards of the land.
- If you don’t have housing for farmworkers, you lose the workers, then you lose the farms.
- Housing Allocations: Counties are getting assigned numbers of houses to build by the state, when they have vast differences in resources. This process is critical to local government success.
- We must address low, middle, and high classes of housing.
- Many of the problems with land use come directly from the Subdivision Act creating the mess.
- School boards, who make decisions about siting schools (which drives housing to former open-space land), are clearly overseeing local decisions, not looking regionally.
- Currently, the financial incentive (through state-controlled tax policy) is for local government to build business not housing (the “fiscalization of land use”).

- Through state economic development, tax incentive and marketing programs may be working to create any kind of new jobs anywhere they can – not necessarily the kind of development consistent with our local goals and plans.
 - Does the above mean that economic development should be subject to the same EGPR goals? That they should have to not subsidize programs that undermine the goals?
- Inter-regional partnerships are only beginning to try to deal with the huge jobs-housing imbalance. This might be symptomatic of a larger problem in land-use decisions: jurisdictions don't want to build housing because it doesn't pay for itself (property taxes don't cover infrastructure expenditures by local government). If OPR can address this system, it would be a huge benefit.
- A large amount of what happens down here is driven by job growth in Santa Clara County - until the State decides that they are going to be fair in making it fiscally feasible to develop housing, you're always going to have this problem.
- Permitting activities and spending activities should reinforce each other. That is, maybe the state's permitting processes should be subject to the same accountability and transparency to the EGPR goals as spending.
- Could this process hold school bond funding close to areas that have comprehensive "quality of life" or "balanced" community funds or plans?
- What about communities that refuse new growth? We have towns here that don't want any more housing. The state should approach from the bottom up – a "big stick" of penalties for not building x units of housing won't work.
- Land-use planning around airports is important. Caltrans has a planning handbook that it doesn't enforce or follow. Airports must have low-density development around them.
- The state can provide incentive dollars for "good" projects, which then help to jump-start a trend as other communities gain trust for their intentions and processes.
- Remember that local budgets are being cut severely right now.
- Communities and the state must provide sufficient infrastructure for housing. Affordable housing in one town benefits the whole county, but if the town doesn't have enough schools, etc., it causes problems.
 - Remember that new housing impacts nearby neighbors, which makes it unpopular, and more so if the existing infrastructure becomes strained.
- Be careful what you wish for... a community that pursues growth (jobs, housing) may grow beyond the character and quality of life attributes that its residents love most. We must acknowledge the "quality of life" attributes that the community wishes to "protect" for future generations, and not just think about technical land use, planning and design issues.

IV. NEEDS: What Can the State Do?

- Encourage local elected officials to think regionally as they make local decisions.
- Both “carrots” and “sticks” from the state in appropriate places.
- Clear definitions of “infill.” The current confusion from the state causes fights locally. But, we don’t need a “one-size-fits-all” definition, instead one we can fit to our areas.
- Clear definition of “mixed use.” It’s also “one-size-fits-all” right now, but can mean different things to different areas.
- Better awareness of mixed use within the lending community.
- Fiscal feasibility for full range of development.
- The state could really strongly tie jobs to housing for the local workforce. Many communities regionally produce a lot of jobs but not housing that's affordable for the people who live there.
- Tie infrastructure to places that have comprehensive neighborhood and regional plans.
- Policies that support housing going to places that have a plan for the appropriate level of infrastructure.
- Greater incentives to encourage regions to develop comprehensive regional plans
- Help regions solve conflicts among regions & state agencies that prohibit advancement of projects—via MOU’s & Joint Powers Agreements
- Put regulations, such as workman's compensation, under the same priorities. They impact mom and pop businesses and chase them out of California.